

# Lies Of Our Times

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President Bush "Levels the Playing Field" with Violeta Chamorro

Credit: Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos

**Nicaragua Election Violence and the Cease-Fire**

**Panama Invasion, Noriega, the CIA, and the Torrijos Murder**

**Paul Krassner on JFK and Jim Garrison**

**TV: Israeli vs. Arab Funding; Philippines Coup Attempt**

**Cuba, South Africa, and Media Racism**

## Lies Of Our Times

A Journal to Correct the Record

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## TO OUR READERS

*Lies Of Our Times* is a magazine of media criticism. "Our Times" are the times we live in but also the words of the *New York Times*, the most cited news medium in the U.S., our paper of record. Our "Lies" are more than literal falsehoods; they encompass subjects that have been ig-

nored, hypocrisies, misleading emphases, and hidden premises—the biases which systematically shape reporting. We can address only a sampling of the universe of media lies and distortions. But, over time, we hope *Lies Of Our Times* will go a long way toward correcting the record. ●

# FIRST EDITION, SECOND EDITION

By Paul Krassner

When Adolfo Calero testified during the Iran-*Contra* hearings that Oliver North—referring to Ronald Reagan—said, “The old man loves my ass,” the *New York Times* reported that Calero testified that North had said that he was “in the good graces” of the President. Although history is punctuated by such colorful details, the newspaper of record opted instead for what it considered good taste.

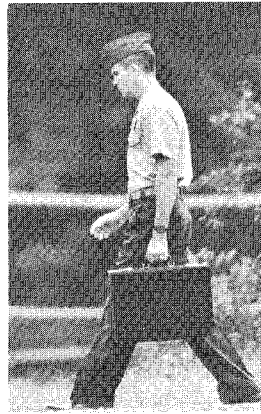
Sometimes, of course, truth in the guise of bad taste has managed to infiltrate the *Times*. For example, conventional folklore has it that Elvis Presley died from a drug overdose, when the actual cause of death was—in the *Times*’s own language, but in their first edition only—“straining at stool.”

Other times, however, such an omission might seem to be of a more sinister motivation. On December 1, 1970, the *Times* cut and changed the meaning of John Leonard’s review of *A Heritage of Stone* by Jim Garrison. Between the first and second editions, the headline was changed from “Who Killed John F. Kennedy?” to “The Shaw-Garrison Affair.” A sub-head, “Mysteries Persist,” disappeared. And the copy’s conclusion was amputated as follows:

Garrison insists that the Warren Commission, the executive branch of the government, some members of the Dallas Police Department, the pathologists at Bethesda who performed the second Kennedy autopsy, and many, many others are lying to the American public.

Frankly, I prefer to believe that the Warren Commission did a poor job, rather than a dishonest one. I like to think that Mr. Garrison invents monsters to explain incompetence. [In later editions, the review ended at this point, chopped off in mid-paragraph. Here’s what was deleted:] But until somebody explains why two autopsies came to two different conclusions about the President’s wounds, why the limousine was washed out and rebuilt without investigation, why certain witnesses near the “grassy knoll” were never asked to testify before the Commission, why we were all so eager to buy Oswald’s brilliant marksmanship in split seconds, why no one inquired into Jack Ruby’s relations with a staggering variety of strange people, why a “loner” like Oswald always had friends and could always get a passport—who can blame the Garrison guerrillas for fantasizing?

Something stinks about this whole affair. *A Heritage of Stone* rehashes the smelliness; the recipe is as unappetizing as our doubts about the official version of what



Credit: World Wide Photos

**The object of the President’s affection.**

happened. (Would then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy have endured his brother’s murder in silence? Was John F. Kennedy quite so liberated from cold war clichés as Mr. Garrison maintains?) But the stench is there, and clings to each of us. Why were Kennedy’s neck organs not examined at Bethesda for evidence of a frontal shot? Why was his body whisked away to Washington before the legally required Texas inquest? Why?

That was John Leonard’s last review for the *Times* before he became their Book Review Editor in January 1971, and my conspiratorial mind has always assumed that it had to do with his understanding of the conditions under which he was hired.

Recently, at a memorial for Abbie Hoffman at the Palladium rock palace in New York City, I met Leonard and asked him about the censorship of that particular book review. He said that it had puzzled him but he was unable to find out who was responsible. He recommended that I ask A.M. Rosenthal. I did, and here is his reply:

August 30, 1989

Dear Mr. Krassner,

I have no recollection at all about the review or whether anything was cut out. I’m sorry I can’t help you.

Sincerely,  
/s/ A.M. Rosenthal

I guess it’s like Oliver North. Sometimes you can hardly tell the difference between what you remember and someone else’s instant replay. ●

[Editors’ Note: *Jim Garrison has recently published the full story of his investigation, On the Trail of the Assassins (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1988). The book is available from IMA; hardcover, illustrated, 368 pp., \$19.95 plus \$1.75 postage and handling.*]



Credit: Donn Young

**Judge Jim Garrison at a recent interview in New Orleans.**

# NICARAGUA'S CEASE-FIRE SUSPENSION: FIELD DAY FOR THE U.S. MEDIA

By William I. Robinson

The U.S. media had a field day with Nicaragua's announcement that it was suspending its unilateral cease-fire with the *contras*. The decision followed military escalation that had left 736 Nicaraguans dead, 1,153 injured, and 1,481 disappeared or kidnaped (Nicaraguan Ministry of Defense Bulletin, cited in *Barricada*, November 2, 1989) and the refusal of either the *contras* or the U.S. to proceed with demobilization plans called for in the Central American peace accords.

The Associated Press continued its invention of Nicaraguan positions. (On June 5, 1989, an AP wire had claimed that Managua came out "in support of repression in China." The

charge was demonstrated to be a complete fabrication, and the news service was forced to run a two-paragraph correction on June 14, 1989.) This time, AP reported in a November 1 cable from Managua that President Daniel Ortega Saavedra not only suspended his government's unilateral cease-fire, but "threatened to cancel" the February 25 elections.

AP claimed the threat was not contained in the official government communiqué announcing the cease-fire suspension but in the statement by the Nicaraguan leader read to his countrymen on La Voz de Nicaragua. In fact, the hour-long statement, transmitted at 6:00 a.m., November 1, reiterated on several occasions that the elections would be held "with or without the *contras*, with or without the cease-fire." Ortega also explained that lifting the cease-fire was necessary precisely because the *contra* escalation was threatening the electoral process. In this context, he referred to discussions in Washington on possible renewal of military aid: "The U.S. Congress will either facilitate or place obstacles in the way of the elections, depending on how they act; it is up to the Yankee Congress and the Yankee President if these elections take place."

Somehow, for AP, this became a "threat to cancel the elections." Even the U.S. government did not reach such a conclusion from Ortega's comment. One official from the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) told me: "I don't know where they came up with that. Everything we've gotten up [*i.e.*, from the U.S. Embassy in Managua] made clear that Ortega said the elections were on." AP issued no corrective this time.

The election cancellation story was "take two" for AP; the first take was several days earlier, in San José, Costa Rica, at the October 27-28 "democracy" summit. The Bush administration made clear in no uncertain terms that it abhorred the idea of sitting down with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who—in Bush's words—was "that unwanted animal at a garden party" (Bush Press Conference, October 28, 1989, San José). Instead, the White House invited right-wing opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro to meet with Bush in San José.

## The CID Poll

At the same time, USIA had commissioned Consultoria Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo (CID), a San José polling firm affiliated with Gallup International, to conduct a poll on the Nicaraguan elections. (USIA has routinely used CID for its polling efforts in Central America since 1983.) The October 27 release of the CID poll, claiming that Chamorro had gained a comfortable lead over Ortega (40 percent to 29 percent of the electorate), was timed precisely for the Bush-Chamorro meeting.

The message was clear: The pro-U.S. opposition in Nicaragua, already paid for with no less than \$17.5 million in U.S. electoral support funds, was the representative Nicaraguan at a "democracy" summit. The bait was certainly tasty for media

## Letters Which Did Not Get Printed: Part 1

[Editors' Note: *We encourage our readers to send us pertinent letters to major newspapers which are rejected for publication. This is one area about which we cannot know unless we hear from you.*]

October 19, 1989

To the Editor of the *Washington Post*:

The October 13 article by Lee Hockstader, about the Nicaraguan opposition's impoverishment, certainly strains credulity.

He notes that at this critical juncture in the election campaign, "the reality" is that UNO (the National Opposition Union) is "practically broke...struggling just to keep afloat."

As proof, he quotes Roberto Guzman, head of one of the opposition parties, who complains that in the headquarters, there are "no paper, no folders, no staples and barely any furniture." In fact, things are so dire that UNO had to advertise for donations of secondhand furniture and typewriters.

Somehow, the picture does not jibe with another reality—the generous amount of dollars the United States has been providing various opposition groups.

In fiscal 1989, Congress approved \$3.5 million to be divided among the independent communications media (\$300,000), democratic political parties (\$350,000), democratic civic and political organizations (\$500,000), democratic unions (\$720,000), democratic women's organizations (\$85,000), community activities (\$550,000), and democratic youth organizations (\$85,000), to name a few. For FY 1990, the figure was increased to \$9 million.

To understand the importance of these sums in the Nicaraguan context, one need only refer to the entire 1988 budget for Nicaragua's Ministry of Health, which was \$1.5 million.

It is also relevant to note that the opposition is composed of some of the country's wealthiest families, who would not have to sacrifice much to underwrite the cost of staples, folders and some secondhand typewriters.

Finally, one can speculate that the same funds that flowed to the *contras* from private U.S. sources (about which we learned through various hearings and trials) are still finding their way south—this time, to the political opposition. For all these reasons, it would appear that Mr. Hockstader has been had.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Koepfel

*Barbara Koepfel lives in Washington, and is the former Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.*

well trained to snap at such anti-Sandinista “public diplomacy” operations. And Nicaragua’s decision to suspend the cease-fire mixed well with the CID-Gallup poll, producing this story: The cease-fire was suspended as a pretext for the Sandinistas to back out of the elections in the face of a democratic opposition that had overtaken them at the polls.

Since its first poll for USIA in 1983, CID has been an instrument of U.S. policy towards Central America. Using highly questionable methodology, it produces polls at critical moments showing popular support for U.S. policies and allies or for the chosen U.S. candidates in regional elections (see sidebar). CID conducted a notorious survey on the eve of the 1986 congressional vote on \$100 million in *contra* military aid, which concluded that a majority of Central Americans were in favor of the package. More recently, the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa admitted that USIA was behind the CID poll this past June which showed majority Honduran approval for the *contra* occupation of that country.

That CID-Gallup has been seriously discredited and its U.S. government connection documented did not bother the ABC, NBC, and CBS television networks or the radio networks which reported on the “latest poll.” Along with AP and other wires out of San José, the *Washington Times* published the poll on its front page (October 30). *USA Today* reported on it too (October 30), as did the *Wall Street Journal* (November 3) and local papers around the country. And while many newspapers did not mention it by name, reference to “the latest polls” which show “the Sandinistas faltering” in the face of their “insurgent democratic opponents” was near universal in the U.S. media.

No one questioned the legitimacy of CID-Gallup. Yet all other polls in recent months, ranging from those conducted by the independent Central America Research Institute at Berkeley, to the Central American University, the Itztani Research Institute and the Manolo Morales Foundation in Managua — the latter run in fact by a faction of the Nicaraguan Conservative Party — coincide in showing FSLN (Sandinista Front for National Liberation) support hovering at about 30-35 percent, UNO (United Nicaraguan Opposition) at some 20 percent, and the bulk of the remainder undecided.

To their credit, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* went for the CID-Gallup bait. However, in front-page stories and editorials, both suggested that the cease-fire suspension indicated Sandinista cold feet over the elections. Similarly, the day of Ortega’s announcement, both papers gave uncritical play to Pretoria’s “warning” that it might suspend Namibian elections because of a supposed infiltration of SWAPO guerrillas. (South Africa later admitted the report was false.) No suggestion was made that this might be a consequence of South African fears of an election loss. But South Africa, unlike Nicaragua, is “constructively engaged.” ●

**NOTE:** The Institute for Media Analysis, Inc., maintains an office in Managua, headed by Edgar Chamorro, in conjunction with its election monitoring project. Readers interested in further information are encouraged to write to the Institute for details, or to order Chamorro’s Monograph, *Packaging the Contras*.

## AP AND THE CID POLL

By Mark L. Kolodziej

Associated Press reporter Tom Raum filed the wire service’s story which stated that “Recent polls show Ortega to be trailing the U.S.-backed presidential candidate, Violeta Chamorro....” In a telephone interview, Raum said that he had read about only one poll, a “Gallup” poll actually conducted by the Costa Rica-based Consultoria Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo (CID). Raum apparently did not know that CID has no direct ties to Gallup in the United States and only loose ties to a London-based organization called Gallup International.

In explaining why the AP used the word “polls” instead of “poll,” one AP reporter in Chicago, who refused to identify himself, said that “these changes” often result at the editor’s desk.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Gallup organization in Princeton, New Jersey, who asked that his name not be used, said in a telephone interview that Gallup affiliates may be compared to Boy Scout troops or Red Cross agencies in foreign nations, and that Gallup U.S.A. could not vouch for the validity of any of these affiliates’ polls.

In fact, as William Bollinger and Daniel M. Lund reported in “Mixing Polls and Propaganda” (*The Nation*, May 7, 1988), CID has had very close ties with the United States Information Agency (USIA), which has commissioned most of its studies. These studies have been difficult to evaluate because USIA routinely classifies them. But researchers who have studied these “Gallup” polls have criticized them as including limited population samples and poorly worded questions and for being unreliable predictors. In the March 1988 election in El Salvador, for example, the CID “Gallup” poll predicted a healthy victory for José Napoleón Duarte. But the opposition ARENA party won the election with the support of 68 percent of the country’s municipalities.

In sum, according to Bollinger and Lund, “Many scholars in Central America and Mexico have greeted CID-Gallup polls with skepticism if not outright disbelief.” This skepticism has been heightened by the suspicion that the USIA is using these polls to promote U.S. foreign policy in the media both here and abroad. ●

# ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NICARAGUA

By Abid Aslam

When pre-election violence erupted in Masatepe, south of Managua, on December 10, 1989, the *New York Times* reported that "Sandinista mobs" deliberately provoked fighting at a National Opposition Union (UNO) rally, killing an "opposition supporter," as part of a government campaign to "intimidate and harass its opponents" (December 12, 1989, p. A3).

Writing from San José, Costa Rica, *Times* reporter Mark Uhlig conveyed the version of events prescribed by a delegation of electoral observers from the Washington-based Center for Democracy (CFD) which had flown in to San José from Managua on December 11, the day Uhlig filed his report. The CFD account, issued initially as a one-page press release and later as a 15-page report, is fraught with distortions and omissions. The background and activities of its authors, furthermore, disqualify the CFD report as a valid news source.

## The Evidence

Reports issued by the United Nations observer mission in Nicaragua, the Organization of American States, the Nicaraguan Supreme Electoral Council (SEC), and the Sandinista government all dismiss this version of events.

U.N. and OAS investigators concluded that it was impossible to establish who provoked the violence. Their reports identified the person killed in the fighting, Manuel Guevara Calero, as a Sandinista supporter, and blamed opposition supporters for vandalizing the Sandinista campaign headquarters and burning two vehicles in Masatepe. These acts of violence were overlooked by CFD until after U.N. and OAS observers reported them.

Opposition supporter Mauro Francisco Cerda, Guevara's killer, testified behind closed doors on separate occasions to U.N., OAS, SEC, and police investigators that he and other opposition supporters had gone to the Masatepe demonstration armed with machetes and bayonets under instructions from UNO organizers, who had said that Sandinista mobs were going to cause trouble and had issued death threats against UNO candidates Violeta Chamorro and Virgilio Godoy. Cerda testified that after Chamorro finished her speech, a whistle was blown and someone in the UNO crowd shouted, "Now." The fighting began seconds later.

Cerda repeated this testimony at an international press conference in Managua on December 18.

That former President Jimmy Carter, who is also an election observer, praised the SEC for "doing an excellent job," as the Associated Press reported on December 16, was ignored by the *Times*. Similarly ignored were three AP dispatches on December 12 which correctly identified Guevara as a Sandinista, not a UNO, supporter and described the violence as two-sided. The only mob activity reported by AP was the UNO mob's march and attack on the Sandinista campaign headquarters. The *Times* limited its coverage of the Masatepe affair to one source: the Center for Democracy.

## CFD's Activities and Background

The CFD delegation's movements also seem revealing. The Masatepe rally, planned for December 17, was brought forward one week to accommodate the CFD delegates, armed with video cameras, who arrived in Managua on December 9. The next day, they travelled to Masatepe, filmed the violence, and returned to Managua where they boarded a plane for San José. Their seats had been booked in advance, according to Nicaraguan immigration and port authority sources quoted in the Nicaraguan press. There they announced their findings to the international press gathered in San José on the second day of a regional summit. The CFD final report was released on December 14, 1989, at a press conference at the U.S. Information Agency's Foreign Press Center. CFD president Allen Weinstein—a Boston University professor—told journalists that he and at least one delegation member had earlier met with President Bush, Vice-President Quayle, and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

CFD, whose Nicaragua operation is financed by the U.S. government through the National Endowment for Democracy, describes itself as "bipartisan." Mark Uhlig and the *Times* repeat this designation as fact, thus justifying their heavy reliance on CFD's report on the Masatepe affair. But "bipartisan" and "non-partisan" are not synonymous, a distinction that seems to elude the *Times*. As early as 1982, Weinstein was publicly speaking out against the Sandinistas. His April 14, 1982, Op-Ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal* criticized the U.S. press for sympathizing with the Sandinistas, and went on to defend the CIA-funded opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*. Last April, Weinstein told a class at Georgetown University, "Nicaragua could never be democratic unless the Sandinistas were out of government" ("Profiles of U.S. Private Organiza-



Credit: Wide World Photos

FSLN supporters carrying the coffin of Manuel Guevara Calero, killed in the melée at Masatepe.

tions and Churches: National Endowment for Democracy," *Groupwatch*, Resource Center, Albuquerque). In 1987, CFD gave its "Sentinel of Freedom" award to Violeta Chamorro, as publisher of *La Prensa*.

This evidence of serious bias should raise doubts about CFD's objectivity as a source on the Nicaraguan election. For Uhlig and the *Times*, however, this bias is "bipartisan," and therefore legitimate. ●

## ANOTHER NON-VOTE

On December 7, 1989, the U.N. General Assembly passed by a 91 to 2 vote a resolution calling on the U.S. to cease its support for the *contras*.

Only Israel and the U.S. voted against it, although there were 41 abstentions—mostly U.S. allies in Europe and the Caribbean.

The Associated Press covered the vote in a two-page dispatch. The *New York Times* never saw fit to report the vote.

## Letters Which Did Not Get Printed: Part 2

November 7, 1989

To the Editor of the *New York Times*:

Daniel Schorr's humorous portrayal of Daniel Ortega as a CIA agent (Op-Ed, "Daniel Ortega: Our Man in Managua?" November 5) could be extended to Guatemala's Jacobo Arbenz, Brazil's João Goulart, Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic, Lazaro Cardenas in Mexico, Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, Salvador Allende in Chile, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, and numerous others. Arbenz, for example, provocatively bought a shipload of arms from Czechoslovakia in 1953-54. This was universally castigated in the leading U.S. media as indefensible and foolish. Critics outside the mainstream, however, pointed to the U.S. boycott of arms to Guatemala and the imminent threat of a U.S.-sponsored invasion as justifying and even compelling Arbenz's actions. Ho Chi Minh kept responding inadequately to Lyndon Johnson's bombing pauses, in the official and dominant media view, although here again outsiders suggested that Johnson's actions were public relations moves covering over an agenda of surrender or escalation.

In the 1984 Nicaraguan election campaign, Ortega's refusing to accommodate Arturo Cruz and arranging for the import of MIGs almost on election day were—for the mainstream press—telling illustrations of his propensity to self-destruct. Critics argued, however, and the record now shows, that the MIG crisis was a piece of Office of Public Diplomacy disinformation, and that Cruz's withdrawal from the election was by plan of his CIA paymaster.

Schorr's comic act is part of a longstanding process whereby enemies of the U.S. government are systematically transformed into fools or villains.

Ellen Ray  
President,  
Institute for Media Analysis

## EVER BEEN LAGGED?

By William H. Schaap

Headline emphases and distortions are an important avenue of expressing bias. A fine case appeared in the July 28, 1989, *New York Times* (p. A14). It read:

### Blacks Found Lagging Despite Gains

The article, by Julie Johnson, was a fair account of a just-released report by the National Research Council on social, political, and economic trends affecting African-Americans since World War II. The study noted that in the two decades after the war there had been significant improvement in "race relations and blacks' status." But, it concluded, "the status of blacks relative to whites has stagnated or regressed since the early 1970s." Indeed, for nearly twenty years, the report determined, there has been a relative increase in the disparity between the races in the areas of "standard of living, education, housing opportunities, earnings, and political participation." It confirmed earlier findings of disparities in infant mortality and access to quality health care.

Significantly, the report hoped to "eradicate the myth of the perpetual underclass and culture as a reason for the lack of black progress." (For a detailed analysis of the pervasiveness of this myth, see Carl Ginsburg, *Race and Media: The Enduring Life of the Moynihan Report* [New York: Institute for Media Analysis, 1989].) The most telling cause noted in the report was existing social and economic separation.

There are two outrages in the headline. One is the use of the expression "Despite Gains." For, as a reader of the article will learn, the gains occurred between 1945 and 1970; since then there has been deterioration, not gain. The other is the use of the term "Lagging." This is a word fraught with implications of self-causation. One lags, one falls behind, one does not "get lagged." Although the article, and the report it discusses, do attempt to "eradicate the myth," the *Times* headline perpetuates it.

By way of footnote, a similar subtle slant can be found in an October 9, 1989, *Times* headline (p. A8), which read, "Growing Gap in Life Expectancies Of Blacks and Whites Is Emerging." The fact is, that while the "gap" was indeed increasing, what was most compelling was that, in absolute terms, the life expectancy of African-Americans was *going down*, while that of whites was going up. The headline disguises this shocking fact. ●

# THE INVASION OF PANAMA

By Noam Chomsky

When a state carries out aggression, its propaganda system has the responsibility to justify the act and suppress the reasons for it in favor of acceptable pretexts. The invasion of Panama fits the script to perfection.

The invasion posed some novel tasks. Earlier resort to state violence could routinely be justified by appeal to the Soviet threat, but that device has lost any shred of credibility. Something new was needed, and, fortunately, the foundation had been laid. Americans hate Noriega, the media correctly relate, so he must go. Why did Americans hate Noriega in 1989, but not in 1985? Why is it necessary to overthrow him now but not then? These are the obvious and fundamental questions. They were systematically evaded. State policy was thus effectively shielded from scrutiny.

## Noriega's Past

Noriega had long been a willing and useful ally, but by 1985 the U.S. began to reassess his role and within two years had decided to remove him. A program of economic warfare was designed to erode Noriega's support among the poor and black population who were his natural constituency, while minimizing the impact on the U.S. business community, a GAO official testified before Congress (*Washington Post Weekly*, December 25, 1989). As policy shifted, the media followed suit in the classic pattern, demonizing Noriega, whipping up popular frenzy over a fraudulent "drug war," and preparing the ground for invasion.

One black mark against Noriega in 1985 was his support for the Contadora peace process. His commitment to the war against Nicaragua was in question, and when the Iran-*Contra* affair broke, his usefulness was clearly at an end. A more general problem was his nationalist and populist gestures, a carryover from the Torrijos period, when the traditional oligarchy was displaced. On New Year's Day, 1990, the London *Economist* observed, "the United States has to hand over to Panama the preponderant share of control over the Panama Canal and the military bases around it" (*Economist*, December 23, 1989), and a few years later the rest follows. Also, a major oil pipeline is 60 percent owned by Panama (*Washington Post Weekly*, December 25, 1989). Clearly, a more amenable Panamanian government was needed, and there was not much time to spare.

In the post-1985 media campaign, Noriega was presented as a demon who must be exorcised, a repeat of the Qaddafi project a few years earlier. But Noriega was known to be a thug when he was a U.S. ally, and remained so, with no relevant change, as the government (hence the media) turned against him. Furthermore, he does not approach the criminality of people the U.S. cheerfully supports. The 1988 Americas Watch report on Human Rights in Panama details abuses, but nothing remotely comparable to the record of U.S. clients in the region or elsewhere. One finds next to nothing about these crucial matters in the U.S. media.

The Bush administration, in fact, took pains to make it clear that Noriega's crimes were not a factor in the invasion. As the troops landed in Panama, the White House announced new high-technology sales to China, noting that \$300 million in business for U.S. firms was at stake and that contacts had secretly resumed a few weeks after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Washington also barred entry to two Chinese scholars invited by U.S. universities, in deference to the Chinese authorities, and announced new subsidized agricultural sales to China and a plan to lift a ban on loans to Iraq. In comparison to Bush's friends in Beijing and Baghdad, Noriega looks positively benign.

Some sensed a "lack of political and moral consistency" in the action against Noriega just as Washington "kisses the hands of the Chinese dictators" (A.M. Rosenthal, *New York Times*, December 22, 1989). The apparent inconsistency vanishes as soon as doctrinal constraints are put aside. In all cases, the actions serve the needs of U.S. power and privilege. The media succeeded in overlooking these not too subtle points—and even many of the facts.

## Our "Commitment to Democracy"

Another pretext for the invasion was our commitment to democracy, deeply offended when Noriega stole the 1989 election that had been won by the U.S.-backed candidate, Guillermo Endara, now placed in office by the invasion. An obvious test comes to mind: What happened in the preceding election in 1984, when Noriega was still *our* thug? Noriega stole the election with more violence than in 1989, barring the victory of Arnulfo Arias and installing Nicolas Ardito Barletta, since known as "*fraudito*" in Panama. Washington opposed Arias, who was considered a dangerous nationalist, preferring Barletta, whose campaign was financed with U.S. government funds through the National Endowment for Democracy, according to U.S. Ambassador Everett Briggs. George Shultz was sent down to legitimate the fraud, praising "Panamanian democracy" at the inauguration. The media carefully looked the other way.

Our 1989 favorite, Guillermo Endara, was close to Arias and remained his spokesman in Panama until his death in 1988 in self-imposed exile. Julia Preston now reports that Endara was chosen to run in 1989 "largely because of his close ties to the late legendary Panamanian politician Arnulfo Arias, who was ousted from the presidency by the military three times since the 1940s" (*Washington Post Weekly*, December 25, 1989)—accurate, but crucially selective. The media once again looked the other way when, during the invasion, Endara denounced the "fraud of 1984," and they do not ask why our fabled "yearning for democracy" was mysteriously awakened only when Noriega had become a nuisance to Washington rather than an asset. (See AP, December 20, 1989; *Boston Globe*, December 21, 1989.)

Another pretext was that Noriega was a drug dealer, as was



known long before, while he was on the CIA payroll. Furthermore, he was not alone. Shortly after Noriega stole the 1984 elections to U.S. applause, the U.S. Attorney in Miami identified Panamanian banks as a major conduit for drug money. A year earlier, a Senate report on banking had described Panama as a major center of criminal capital and a key link in drug transshipment and drug money laundering. The bankers are now being returned to power in Panama. It all makes good sense. As Drug Czar in the early 1980s, George Bush canceled the small federal program aimed at banks engaged in laundering drug money, and this central link in the trade has been excluded from the current "drug war."

### Protecting American Lives

The most prominent pretext for the invasion was to "protect American lives." There had been "literally hundreds of cases of harassment and abuse of Americans" in recent months by Noriega's forces, the White House announced (Marlin Fitzwater, quoted in the *Boston Globe*, December 20, 1989) — though, curiously, no warning to Americans to stay away, up until the day of the invasion. A U.S. soldier was killed under disputed circumstances, but what tipped the scales was the threat to the wife of an officer who was arrested and beaten. Bush "often has difficulty in emotionally charged situations," the *New York Times* reported, "but his deep feelings clearly came through" when he spoke of this incident, proclaiming, in his best Ollie North rendition, that "this President" is not going to stand by while American womanhood is threatened (Andrew Rosenthal, *New York Times*, December 22, 1989). The press did not explain why "this President" refused even to issue a protest when, a few weeks earlier, an American nun, Donna Ortiz, had been kidnaped, tortured, and sexually abused by the Guatemalan police — or why the story was not worth reporting when it appeared on the wires on November 6. Nor were Bush's "deep feelings" contrasted with his response to the treatment of American women and other religious and humanitarian workers in El Salvador a few weeks later, a small footnote to the brutal government actions praised by James Baker at a November 29 press conference as "absolutely appropriate" — a comment that largely escaped notice (AP, November 29, 1989).

Government/media doctrine holds that Bush "had few alternatives" to invasion, having failed to oust Noriega by other means (R.W. Apple, *New York Times*, November 21, 1989). "Mr. Bush may have seen no alternative to invasion," Tom Wicker added, though as a dove, he regards Bush's arguments as not "conclusive" (*New York Times*, December 22, 1989). The underlying assumption is that the U.S. has every right to achieve its aims, so that violence is legitimate if peaceful

means fail. But the doctrine has a crucial feature: The right to violence is reserved to the United States.

### International Law

The fundamental doctrine is further clarified by the treatment of international law. That its precepts were violated by the invasion was sometimes noted, but dismissed (*Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 1989) on the grounds that the "legalities are murky" (which is nonsense) or simply an irrelevance. Exactly ten years earlier, Vietnam invaded Cambodia after

murderous attacks against Vietnamese villages with thousands of casualties, overthrowing the Pol Pot regime. By any standards, the justification for this invasion is far more plausible than anything that Washington could offer regarding Panama. But in that case, the legalities were considered neither murky nor irrelevant. Rather, Vietnam's violation of international law deeply offended our tender sensibilities, establishing Vietnam as "the Prussians of Asia" (*New York Times*), whom we must punish, along with the people of Cambodia, by economic warfare and tacit support for the Khmer Rouge. The radically different reactions are readily explained by the doctrine that the U.S. alone enjoys the right of lawless violence. But the obvious questions remain unasked, and the insights effectively suppressed.

This is a mere sample, but enough to illustrate "the kind of hard-hitting, no holds barred reporting that makes the press such an essential component of this country's democratic system," as Sanford Unger writes, overcome with awe at the magnificence of his profession (*Foreign Policy*, Winter 1989/90). ●



Credit: Wide World Photo

### U.S. soldier frisks Panamanian desperado.

## CBS AND THE PANAMA INVASION

General Fred Woerner appeared repeatedly on CBS-TV news programs and specials to comment on the military and political aspects of the Panama invasion. Hired in the weeks before the invasion as a news expert, Woerner was previously the head of Southern Command (Southcom) in Panama, until he was replaced by General Maxwell Thurman.

According to the London *Economist* (January 8, 1990, p. 26), "The invasion plan was largely concocted by [Thurman's] predecessor, General Fred Woerner, who was ousted from the Southcom job because he disagreed with the way Mr. Bush was handling the region. Military sources say that the invasion was carried out almost exactly as General Woerner had planned it." ●

# NORIEGA, TORRIJOS, AND THE CIA

By Ellen Ray

There has been considerable speculation about just what information Manuel Noriega might produce to avoid a trial in March by implicating President Bush and the CIA in illegal acts committed with Bush's complicity.

Forgotten in all the coverage is an Associated Press dispatch from June 1987, the subject of which caused riots in Panama at the time. The treatment by the *New York Times* of that item is of some interest.

On June 8, 1987, Col. Roberto Diaz Herrera, who had retired several days before as Chief of Staff of the Panamanian military, held a press conference in Panama City to say that he had been forced to retire, and that he had information, and some proof, that Noriega had conspired with Lt. Gen. Wallace Nutting, the chief of the U.S. Army's Southern Command, based in Panama, "and with the CIA, to plant a bomb aboard the aircraft in which [Noriega's predecessor, and Diaz's cousin] General Torrijos was killed when it crashed in the mountains in 1981" (AP dispatch, *New York Times*, June 10, 1987, early edition, p. A3). Diaz also implicated Col. Alberto Purcell, the Deputy Chief of Staff, who he said was paid \$250,000 by "a CIA official whom he did not identify, other than to say that he thought the agent was from the Dominican Republic." Diaz also charged Noriega with the murder of an opposition leader, former minister Hugo Spadafora, in 1985.

The dispatch noted, "In Washington, a CIA spokeswoman denied that the agency had been involved in the incident." This in itself was highly unusual, since the CIA routinely refuses to comment on allegations of covert operations.

In the later editions of the *Times*, the dispatch was somewhat modified. The paragraphs about Col. Purcell and the CIA payoff were dropped. The article now noted:

Colonel Diaz repeated his charges today, but later retreated from them, saying he was not blaming anyone.

"I don't want to speak of blaming anyone because I think that no one is to blame, not even the people I have blamed and not even General Noriega himself," Colonel Diaz said.

"Perhaps I am the only one to blame for many things," he added. "I have provoked an agitation in this nation which has many people upset and tense."

As the story noted, while Col. Diaz had evidently been searching his soul, there were riots in Panama City by students demanding an investigation of his charges, and Gen. Noriega had accused him of "high treason."

## Selective Memory

What is most significant about this case — a high foreign official accusing the United States, a commanding general, and the CIA of conspiring to murder a foreign leader — is that the allegation was promptly excised from history by our newspaper of record. On June 14, 1987, the *Times* carried a brief piece in the *Sunday Week in Review* on the riots in Panama. Col. Diaz was called "a self-described sinner [who] said fear that God would punish him if he remained silent" had led him to accuse Gen. Noriega. This subtly discrediting description was followed by a statement that his allegation had been that Gen. Noriega bore the responsibility for planting the bomb "that, the colonel said, caused the 1981 death of ... Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera." No mention of Gen. Nutting, the CIA, or the agent from the Dominican Republic.

On three occasions that summer the *Times* reiterated Diaz's accusation, in each instance referring to it as a charge against Gen. Noriega alone. On June 21, 1987, Stephen Kinzer said that "the colonel contended that General Noriega was also responsible for the death" of Torrijos ("Future of Canal an Issue Again in Panama," *Week in Review*, June 21, 1987, p. 3). Kinzer referred to the "1981 helicopter crash that had been considered an accident," a gross misstatement, since, from the very day of the crash there has been serious suspicion throughout the world that the CIA was involved in the murder — albeit none of it in the *New York Times* since the initial AP story.

On August 2, 1987, a *Times* article said Diaz charged that the bomb was placed on the plane "on orders from General Noriega." And on August 7, the paper said that Diaz "accused General Noriega of ... plotting the murder of General Torrijos."

The next mention of Gen. Diaz in the *New York Times* was not until January 5, 1990, in a list of highlights of recent Panamanian history ("Noriega's Surrender: Panama in Disorder: The 1980s," p. A11). This item appeared:

June 1987: Diaz Herrera, retiring as second-in-command, accuses Noriega of drug-related activities, rigging 1984 election and murdering Hugo Spadafora, former Vice Minister of Health who accused Noriega of drug trafficking. Protest movement demands investigation into Diaz Herrera allegations and return to democracy. Street protests are brutally crushed.

The charges of involvement in the death of Torrijos, by the CIA, Gen. Nutting, or even Gen. Noriega, have gone down the historical memory hole. ●



Credit: Wide World Photos

**Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera: Was he murdered by the CIA, Gen. Nutting, and Gen. Noriega?**

# U.S. BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Stephen R. Shalom

One of the most important issues being debated in the Philippines today is the future of the U.S. military bases in that country.

Since the United States gave its Philippine colony independence, it has maintained extensive military facilities there (Clark Air Base alone is more than 130,000 acres, larger than Washington, D.C.), with absolute control over all military operations and essentially extraterritorial jurisdiction over personnel. In 1972, according to a Senate report, U.S. officials noted that "nowhere in the world are we able to use our military bases with less restrictions than we do in the Philippines."

Despite a massive U.S. propaganda effort in the Philippines and the not so veiled threat by Washington to withhold financial assistance for the impoverished country unless the bases agreement is renewed, public opposition to the bases has been growing. Nationalists have been demanding the withdrawal of the bases in 1991, when the current agreement expires, and even the right wing has felt it necessary to call for a phase-out of the bases over no more than five to ten years.

## The Soviet Threat

Since the end of World War II, the United States has justified its military policies in terms of a threat from the Soviet Union or its Chinese surrogate. There has been much to condemn in Soviet foreign policy, but Moscow's machinations had very little to do with U.S. interventions from Guatemala to Iran to the Dominican Republic to Vietnam. Rather, the Soviet Union has served as a useful bogey to help legitimize interventions anywhere. The Philippine bases were never seen by U.S. policymakers as necessary for the defense of the Philippines, but as springboards for the projection of U.S. military power to theaters as far away as the Persian Gulf. And this sort of power projection has generally been endorsed in the media. For example, the editors of the *New York Times* commented on October 20, 1987 (p. A34), that because the Reagan administration had developed a coherent policy to contain Iran it had "thereby earned the right to take risks in the gulf" by dispatching a massive naval armada, a right one imagines the *Times* would not grant to all nations.

In the late 1970s the Soviet Union provided the Pentagon with a new rationale for its Philippine bases by obtaining access to naval facilities at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. The military significance of this was minimal, but U.S. officials portrayed it as being of critical strategic import. The bases in the Philippines, the Pentagon now asserted, were necessary to counteract the ominous Soviet presence in the region.

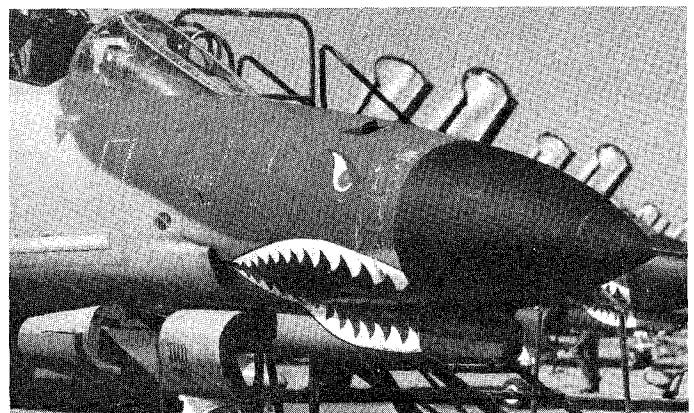
## Gorbachev's Offers

In 1986 this justification for the Philippine bases was seriously undermined when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev hinted that he would be willing to withdraw Soviet forces from Vietnam if the U.S. did likewise in the Philippines (an idea

first put forward by a retired Philippine diplomat). Washington ignored the suggestion and instead issued dire warnings of Soviet intentions of taking over the Pacific. This propaganda effort was aided by the press, particularly the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. William Branigan wrote a lengthy piece in the *Post* in which he quoted the commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command saying that the Soviet build-up at Cam Ranh Bay "was the most significant development in this theater in recent years" ("Soviet Military Operations Seen Increasing in the Pacific," August 1, 1986, pp. A17, A24). No mention was made of the tradeoff offer. In the *Times Magazine*, Clyde Haberman warned of the "Challenge in the Pacific" (September 7, 1986, p. 26). "The growth of its Pacific Fleet signals Moscow's determination to make inroads in a U.S. stronghold," read the subhead. Among the ominous signs Haberman reported was a tuna fishing agreement between the Soviet Union and the small South Pacific nation of Kiribati.

On September 16, 1988, Gorbachev made his bases trade-off offer explicit. The Reagan administration immediately dismissed the Soviet overture. U.S. officials now admitted that the Philippine bases were far more valuable from a military point of view than anything the Soviet Union had in Vietnam. But even though the U.S. bases are the dominant facilities in the region, this does not make the Gorbachev offer unreasonable. In Europe, where Soviet tanks outnumber those of NATO (though not by as much as Cold Warriors liked to pretend), U.S. officials call for — and Gorbachev has agreed in principle to — "asymmetrical" cuts. In similar fashion, in the Western Pacific, where the U.S. navy enjoys a substantial military edge and maintains an offensive posture, asymmetrical cuts are appropriate as well. Removing the foreign bases of both superpowers from Southeast Asia would be an important first step in this process.

But those who want to preserve the U.S. ability to intervene in third world conflicts reject any diminution in the U.S.



Credit: Kenneth Silverman

**F-4 Phantom jets at Clark Air Base. Similar planes provided air support to the Aquino government during the coup attempt last November.**

power-projection capability, of which the Philippine bases are a crucial part. Thus, might-makes-rightists like *New York Times* columnist William Safire called the Soviet offer a “sucker play,” an attempt to put “the Soviet navy in position to dominate the Far East,” a mischievous offer designed to fan anti-U.S. sentiment in the Philippines (“Mischievous in Moscow,” September 19, 1988, p. A23). That Cam Ranh Bay is the Soviet Union’s only base in Southeast Asia, and its next nearest base (at Vladivostok) is easily cut off from the open sea was of no concern to Safire. The *Times* editors concurred, calling the offer not only asymmetrical, but “mischievous” as well (“Mr. Gorbachev’s Asian Serenade,” September 24, 1988, p. 26). Richard C. Holbrooke, a former assistant secretary of state under Carter, wrote in *Newsweek* that Gorbachev had “mischievously proposed” a tradeoff (October 17, 1988, p. 42). John Hughes of the *Christian Science Monitor* warned the U.S. to keep its hand on its wallet (September 21, 1988, p. 12). And the *Philadelphia Inquirer* hoped Philippine President Aquino would resist “false optimism about any quick Soviet departure from Cam Ranh Bay” (October 24, 1988).

On October 2, 1988, the *Times* ran an Op-Ed piece by two high U.S. officials, Gaston Sigur of the State Department and Richard Armitage of Defense (“To Play in Asia, Moscow Has to Pay,” p. A25). The writers accused Gorbachev of being dishonest in making his offer because of the recent growth in Soviet forces threatening Asia. In fact, in the previous three years Moscow had reduced the size of its naval forces in the area, reduced the operating tempo of its navy and the sortie

rate of its naval aircraft, cut distant naval deployments, curtailed aggressive naval exercises, and removed theater nuclear forces that were based in Asia (the SS-20s). (See also Thomas A. Brooks, “Soviet Navy Perspectives,” *Proceedings*, U.S. Naval Institute, May 1989, pp. 224, 226, 230.)

Paul H. Kreisberg, a former State Department official now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote to the *Times* to criticize the Sigur and Armitage article (letter, October 13, 1988, p. A26). He took them to task for their exaggerations of the Soviet threat, but, interestingly, his view of the tradeoff proposal seemed to value U.S. military advantage more than international peace. Gorbachev’s offer, Kreisberg wrote, “is a pure gift,” because the U.S. could ignore the tradeoff unless the Filipinos forced the U.S. out, in which case Washington could then insist that Moscow live up to its promise to withdraw as well.

But though Gorbachev’s new thinking has had little impact in Washington, it will make it increasingly difficult to rally Philippine opinion behind an anti-Soviet crusade. As Leticia Shahani, chair of the Philippine Senate’s Foreign Affairs Committee, asked members of the U.S. Congress recently: “Where’s the threat?” (*Newsweek*, November 13, 1989, p.6).

Given this situation, U.S. officials have been frantically searching for some additional cosmetic concessions they can make to Philippine nationalism while still retaining the bases. Steven Erlanger reported from Manila that U.S. officials are prepared to negotiate a new agreement that will address increasing Philippine concerns about sovereignty (*New York*

## ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT

By Glenn Alcalay and Abid Aslam

The spin doctors at the *New York Times* were kept busy during the sixth and most recent attempt to topple the Aquino government in a coup d’état.

A lead editorial the day after U.S. air support saved President Corazon Aquino and the Malacañang Palace from aerial bombardment could have served as a State Department press release: “There can be no general rules for use of U.S. military forces in emergencies. Each case is special. In the case of this week’s mission in Manila, Mr. Bush deserves high marks” (“Measured Mission in Manila,” December 2, 1989).

On December 6, Steven Erlanger reminded *Times* readers that the U.S. had defended the “nurturing of the Philippines’ fledgling rule of law” under Aquino (December 6, 1989, p. A8). The paper’s lead editorial the next day followed in the same vein.

In pursuing this line, the *Times* downplayed the increasing social and political instability of a country ravaged by civil strife, economic deterioration, a worsening human rights record, and unfulfilled promises of meaningful land reform. The *Times* also neglected to mention Aquino’s 1987 address before the Philippines Military Academy, in

which she promised to “unsheathe the sword of war” against the leftwing insurgency of the New People’s Army.

With another coup possibly in the works, however, Washington is preoccupied with keeping its Philippine bases open at all costs. Hence President Bush (a former director of the CIA) has dispatched deputy national security adviser Robert M. Gates (a former deputy director of the CIA) to assess the “viability” of the Aquino government and “public sentiment toward the United States in the Philippines,” according to Larry A. Nicksch of the Congressional Research Service (*New York Times*, January 18, 1990, p. A12).

If keeping the bases open requires a military government, there is no reason to suppose that the Bush administration will find this objectionable. The *Times* adapted comfortably to Marcos’s takeover in 1972, and there are hints of its flexibility now as well. In his portrait of renegade military commander and coup leader Gregorio “Gringo” Honasan (December 2, 1989, p. 6), reporter Seth Mydans hardly conceals his admiration, describing Honasan as “magnetic” and “one of the most compelling personalities in Philippine public life.” ●

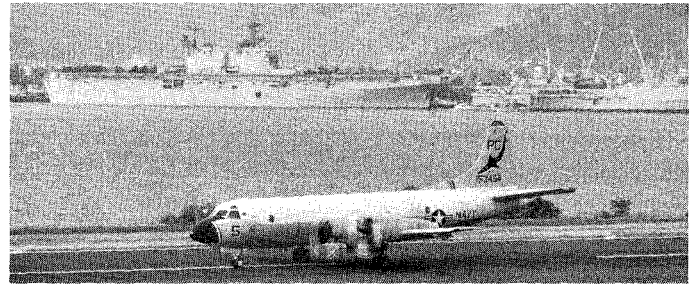
*Times*, October 20, 1989, p. A6). "The agreement is expected to include joint-use arrangements like those common for American military bases in NATO countries and Japan." Erlanger quoted a western diplomat as saying that the U.S. is "prepared to discuss a relationship that is more fundamentally equal' and puts both countries' armed forces 'side by side,'... so long as American operational flexibility remains." Erlanger's article was headlined, "U.S. May Yield on Philippine Bases," but if U.S. "operational flexibility remains," then the U.S. is yielding on absolutely nothing of substance.

### Conclusion

The administration of Corazon Aquino, heavily dependent as it is on the United States, is likely to sign a new agreement with the U.S. But Aquino will not have an easy time. Already more than half the members of the Philippine Senate have called for the unequivocal withdrawal of the bases in 1991, and, according to the terms of the new Philippine constitution, the Senate must ratify by two-thirds vote any new bases pact. What Aquino will need in order to get the treaty approved is some way of portraying the accord as a nationalist victory. And already the *Times* is assisting in this effort. What Erlanger

reported as the new U.S. negotiating ploy was described in a news report by Richard Halloran (November 10, 1989, p. A3) as the position of some Philippine nationalists: "Filipino nationalists have demanded that the United States evacuate the bases or grant greater Philippine sovereignty over them."

It would be convenient indeed for the United States if nationalist sentiment could be placated by allowing the Philippine armed forces to serve "side by side" with U.S. military. But there is no evidence that this U.S. "concession" finds any support among Philippine nationalists. ●



Credit: Kenneth Silverman

Subic Bay Naval Station.

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## CHILE UPDATE

By JoAnn Wypijewski

The picture dominating the front page of the *New York Times* for December 15 showed Augusto Pinochet smiling and waving. The headlines bracketing it announced that in the first presidential election in Chile in nearly two decades the opposition candidate, Patricio Aylwin, had triumphed easily over two men further to the right, one of them Pinochet's economic minister and political heir. So why Pinochet? Would the *Times* or any other paper (the *Washington Post* showed the general casting his ballot) illustrate news of the transformation of Czechoslovakian politics with a picture of Gustav Husak waving goodbye? With Eastern Europe it is the exuberant children and not the defeated parents who inscribe the historical moment.

With Chile the story is quite different. Shirley Christian began her report on the election this way: "Gen. Augusto Pinochet, bowing to the people's will that he give up power, today joined with seven million voters in choosing his successor, and with 93 percent of the votes counted, a former Senator claimed victory." Here Pinochet — bowing, joining, choosing — is the author of Chile's future.

The photograph properly translated that message, but in its falsity — the profile of benevolence — one can also read the opposing truth. In all the election-day photographs the general is dressed in a business suit, a fashion decision made for political appearances at the time of the 1988 plebiscite. Unlike his admirers in the press, though, Pinochet has never honored the delicacy of this deception. When he went on television in 1988 to "accept" the result of the plebiscite he left the avuncular mask and civilian clothes behind. Afterward, he instituted

a series of laws to restrain the prospective "democratic" government's control over the economy, the military and mass communications. The Constitution, which he wrote in 1980 and, having destroyed the country's electoral rolls, forced the people to ratify via transparent ballot, enshrines him as head of the army, senator for life, and de facto power in the national security council and codifies numerous repressive policies. In Congress, because of an apportionment system cobbled by his accomplices, the far right now holds more seats than its votes warranted. And after March the general will keep watch from an office directly facing the presidential palace which Aylwin, his own fortunes the result of a highly managed political process, will occupy. If Daniel Ortega did the same in Nicaragua, the United States would probably invade.

No one is more intent on obscuring this reality than Shirley Christian. She excluded these details in her 21-paragraph story (in contrast to reporters for the *Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor*) and instead hailed the "smooth transition to democracy," a "process ... designed as part of the 1980 Constitution, which was drafted at the direction of General Pinochet and given voter approval that year." But though she is far bolder in her adulation than some of her colleagues, her central proposition is also theirs: that what Chile has just experienced is the restoration of democracy. Always more direct than his flatterers, Pinochet announced after casting his vote, "On September 11, 1973, we embarked on a mission. Today I say: Mission accomplished." His mission was fascism. And on December 14 the Chilean people completed only the first hobbled step away from it. ●

# POLITICS AND PRINCIPLE: THE "DAYS OF RAGE" AFFAIR

By Nabeel Abraham

From the moment film producer/director Jo Franklin-Trout submitted her film about the Palestinian uprising to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in August 1988 until its broadcast on September 6, 1989, "Days of Rage" was mired in controversy. Much of that controversy remained behind closed doors at PBS. There were at least three inexplicable postponements in broadcast dates, endless checks for accuracy, and nagging questions about "offensive" material and the need for balance. A copy of Franklin-Trout's film even found its way to the Israeli Embassy despite her objections to the suggestion by PBS that the embassy review the final product before airing (Howard Rosenberg, "PBS Backs Away from Palestinian Documentary," *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1989, Part V, pp. 1, 4).

By spring 1989 the film was slated for a June 5 broadcast. PBS even publicized the program as part of its "fresh breeze" of summer and an "unprecedented opportunity to hear Palestinians' reasons for the uprising and their point of view concerning reported Israeli repression" (*ibid.*). Then suddenly WNYC-TV withdrew broadcast sponsorship under its new vice president, Chloe Aaron, who labeled the film "a pure propaganda piece," and compared it to Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi film "Triumph of the Will" (Jeremy Gerard, "PBS and 2 Affiliates Dispute Film on Palestinians," *New York Times*, May 2, 1989, p. 15). A PBS official noted that without a sponsoring station, no major public TV station or regional network would agree to air the controversial documentary. Eventually WNET agreed to present the program on the condition that the broadcast date be postponed to prepare "an opening and a follow-up panel discussion similar to the one WNYC had arranged to air after the program," as Rosenberg reported.

By midsummer, "Days of Rage" appeared to have weathered the storm over content and sponsorship; a September broadcast date seemed firm. An early review of the film by Rosenberg, the *Los Angeles Times* media critic, was positive. He described "Days of Rage" as "a powerful, well-made program that conveys a message expressed in fragments on newscasts but never before presented on American TV as a documentary-length statement without rebuttal" (*Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1989, Part V, pp. 1, 4).

Then matters took an unexpected turn. Exactly one week before the September 6 broadcast, *The New Republic* ran a story alleging "Days of Rage" was "produced in close cooperation" with the Arab-American Cultural Foundation, an organization "headed by a friend and adviser to PLO chief Yasir Arafat" (a reference to Georgetown University Professor Hisham Sharabi). The story, by Steven Emerson, further alleged Franklin-Trout had agreed to transfer ownership of her film to the foundation after its PBS broadcast. Both Franklin-Trout and Sharabi denied the allegations. Nevertheless, Emerson's story created the appearance of surreptitious Arab

funding, an impression aided by the sometimes conflicting statements of persons associated with the foundation (Steven Emerson, "Film Flam: The Secret History of 'Days of Rage,'" *The New Republic*, September 18 and 25, 1989, issued August 31, with a prepublication press release the day before).

## The Effort to Derail

Emerson's strategically placed article almost accomplished single-handedly what a dozen or so major Jewish organizations had been unable to do—derail broadcast of "Days of Rage." In the tension-filled week preceding the broadcast, PBS executives considered canceling the program (Gerard, "Film Maker Is on Board of Arab Organization," *New York Times*, September 1, 1989, p. 16). "Days of Rage" eventually aired with a lengthy disclaimer at the opening and closing specifically mentioning Emerson's allegations in *The New Republic*, although the disclaimer admitted PBS was "unable to confirm the allegations" (Gerard, "PBS Adds Disclaimer to Palestinian Program," September 6, 1989, p. C20). In fact, the film's financing had not been an issue until PBS executives read Emerson's article (Gerard, "PBS Studies Financing of Film on Palestinians," August 31, 1989, p. C24). Emerson's story triggered an investigation that is still under way. In a recent telephone interview Lance Ozier, the PBS official heading the investigation, admitted Emerson's allegations of financial irregularities remain unsubstantiated.

Emerson's allegations were immediately seized upon by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. That both Emerson (the author of a book on Arab financial dealings) and *The New Republic* are extremely pro-Israel went unmentioned. In the week before the film's broadcast, the *Times* ran no fewer than five news stories, the *Post*, three. With the exception of a story about the filmmaker (Phil Macombs, "The Producer and the 'Days of Rage' Quagmire," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1989, pp. B1, B12), none was positive. On the day of the broadcast alone the *Times* ran four pieces related to the film, including Op-Ed pieces by Franklin-Trout and Emerson.

In a September 6 *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, Emerson explained his interest in the film by invoking the public's "right to know who is funding or shaping the news, especially if foreign interests are involved" ("Financed by Arab Money," p. A25). Since this is an admirable principle, especially if domestic interests are also included, I decided to send a letter to the *Times* arguing that Emerson's principle also could be applied to many other documentaries, like Claude Lanzmann's "Shoah," which for some reason was not deemed "controversial."

According to a 1986 news story in the Israeli daily, *Davar*, Lanzmann received \$850,000 directly from the Israeli government to make his celebrated movie. *Davar's* source was Knes-

set member Eliyahu Ben Elissar, who said that Prime Minister Menachem Begin personally approved the payment in 1977, finding Lanzmann's project "a matter of Jewish interest." The paper added that Ben Elissar, who was director-general of the Prime Minister's office at the time, "tried to mobilize other donors for the film, although the State of Israel did not finance it further" (Yoel Admoni, *Davar*, June 16, 1986).

Although the letter was never published or acknowledged, a story appeared in the *Times* a week later mentioning "Shoah" in a discussion of special interest funding for documentaries in general. The story noted, erroneously, that PBS had "purchased" Lanzmann's film "with money contributed by Bank Leumi, a leading Israeli bank, among others." (PBS officials interviewed for this article—WNET publicist Jill Schoenback and PBS official Lance Ozier—stated that the *Times* was mistaken.) There was no specific mention of the other funders and no subsequent correction of the erroneous statement that the Israeli bank played a role in PBS's acquisition of the film. But the story, which argued for special interest financing of PBS documentaries as long as full disclosure was maintained, quietly tiptoed around *Davar's* damaging disclosure (Gerard, "Guidelines for PBS: Are They Still Valid?" September 14, 1989, p. 15).

### An Unexpected Contrast

The *Times's* evasion in the case of "Shoah," failing to reveal compromising details about Israeli government funding, suggests that the paper's coverage of the "Days of Rage" controversy was dictated by politics, not principle. This conclusion received unexpected confirmation when PBS announced plans to broadcast a pro-Israeli film that "was financed with help from the Israeli consul general in New York" (Gerard, "PBS Film About West Bank Was Done With Israeli Help," *New York Times*, December 2, 1989, p. 48).

In marked contrast to the controversy that engulfed "Days of Rage," the *Times* and PBS soft-peddled the pro-Israeli film's funding and slanted politics. Gerard merely acknowledged that "promotional material on the film distributed to PBS stations does not mention" the consul's involvement. He had earlier assured readers that although the film's funding ultimately came from four Jewish businessmen recommended by the Israeli Embassy, "PBS guidelines state that religious or ethnic affiliations do not necessarily disqualify individuals from underwriting projects" ("PBS to Broadcast Israeli Side of West Bank Story," November 30, 1989, p. C21).

The *Times* also reported without comment in the November 30 story such eyebrow raisers as the film "begins with a declaration that the producers have not interviewed Palestinians" in a documentary about the Palestinian *intifada*; and that PBS would make no attempt to offer a "Palestinian perspective" on the film. Gerard's December 2 story employed extensive quotes from various PBS and WNET officials to construct an elaborate defense of the film's funding.

The issues that hounded "Days of Rage" suddenly disappeared in the case of "A Search for Solid Ground: The *Intifada* Through Israeli Eyes" (which aired on PBS January 16).

What was once controversial now became patently *uncontroversial*. There were no calls for balance; no pious Op-Eds about the public's "right to know who is funding or shaping the news, especially if foreign interests are involved" (Steven Emerson); no demands for lengthy wrap-around; no *New York Times* and *Washington Post* reporters pounding the pavement to PBS, the Israeli Consulate, and the four businessmen, demanding to know the full extent of foreign involvement and money in the PBS documentary; and no strategically placed articles in *The New Republic* exposing the "foreign interests" behind the film.

*Times* media critic Walter Goodman tried to modulate the contradictions in coverage of the two documentaries by telling readers that "neither is a balanced work" ("How PBS Handles Mideast Viewpoints in 2 Documentaries," *New York Times*, December 5, 1989, p. 15). Goodman even hinted at an underlying anti-Palestinian bias when he asked rhetorically: "But is WNET being quite as tough on the pro-Israeli program as it was on the pro-Palestinian program? Either the packaging of the first documentary was too much or the packaging of the second is too little." Goodman attributed the lack of consistency to pressure from the station's "Jewish contributors."

Goodman defended the divergent treatment of funding. The "affiliations" of the "four benefactors" is not "solid ground for being barred from underwriting a program, nor is the fact that an Israeli official helped round up the donors." In the case of "Days of Rage," Goodman reiterated the still unsubstantiated assertion that the film's producer received some funding from the Arab-American Cultural Foundation, while noting that "PBS was unable to confirm the assertion."

### Drawing the Line

Having linked "Days of Rage" to the Arab-American organization, which "receives money from Arab countries," Goodman then distinguished "getting money directly from an interested party like the Israeli government or the Arab-American Cultural Foundation and getting it from people who are merely on good relations with such a party" like the four Jewish businessmen. "Nothing invidious about that," Goodman wrote; "a line has to be drawn somewhere." The line, of course, is the political one drawn between "our" side and "theirs" that the *New York Times* and PBS toe all too well. ●



Credit: Prensa Latina

**Palestinian women and Israeli soldiers at Jabaliya refugee camp.**

# FOSSIL COLD WARRIORS: THE *TIMES* ON CUBA

By Debra Evenson

The U.S. media have long called Fidel Castro a Soviet "proxy" or "puppet." However, since Castro declined to adopt Mikhail Gorbachev's reform program, they have tried to depict the two leaders as at each other's throat. After a December 7, 1989, speech, in which Castro denounced the decline of socialism in Eastern Europe, the *New York Times* derided him as "The Fossil Marxist" (editorial, December 11, 1989) and accused him of various heresies, from executing Soviet sympathizers to "suspiciously" timing the FMLN offensive in El Salvador to embarrass Gorbachev. This twist on Cold War dogma breeds more distortions and errors. Political developments and debate in Cuba are ignored in order to sustain the notion of Cuban isolation, central to the characterization of Castro (and, by extension, Cuba) as a "fossil."

The *Times* is correct in reporting that Castro has vowed never to convert to capitalism. Their coverage of his December 7 speech, however, like their coverage of Cuban politics, was highly selective and out of context. In the speech, Castro described the difficult challenges facing Cuba today, and condemned Eastern European movements which seek to replace the values of socialism with capitalism—which he said would make life harder for Cuba and other third world countries for whom capitalism has meant neocolonization and its attendant miseries, including unequal terms of trade.

Castro referred frequently to "the mistakes" and "undeniable errors" committed by socialism, and reaffirmed the need for reform. But why, he asked, "must the reforms be along capitalist lines?" Castro did not, as the *Times* editorial charged, accuse Gorbachev of "slandering socialism [and] discrediting the party." Instead, the passage selectively quoted actually criticized in general those who seek to solve socialism's problems by destroying the Communist Party.

Unacknowledged by the *Times* editorialists, Cuba's political future is a current topic of debate in that country. Though somewhat shaken by recent corruption scandals, the Party continues to enjoy popular support. Even so, most Cubans, including the country's leadership, agree that their political system is in need of reform; many proposals are being debated and some have already been implemented. For example, secret balloting was recently begun in contested elections for lower-level positions in the party organization. This change went unreported in the *Times*.

Addressing a large crowd on December 28, Roberto Robaina, head of the Union of Communist Youth, said that while Cuba's youth embraced socialism, they would not passively accept policies forged by the previous generation. The next day, the banner headline in the Party paper *Granma* read, "If the youth is critical it is because our party has taught us to think with our own heads." These developments also eluded the at-

ention of the *New York Times*.

As Cubans seek some sort of consensus on what further changes should be made and how, they are concerned that change must not leave openings for destabilization efforts from the U.S. or elsewhere. As a result, the pace of change has been extremely cautious.

Cubans are less isolated internationally than ever before. Relations between Cuba and its Latin American neighbors are substantially improved, and Cubans receive good news coverage, at least of international affairs, even if domestic reporting remains limited. Cubans, like most Latin Americans, received more complete coverage of the U.S. invasion of Panama than did the American public. Since these facts dissolve the myth of isolation so crucial to the "fossil" caricature, they are overlooked by the *Times* editorialists.

Others are more committed to error. Contrary to Julia Preston's assertion in the *New York Review of Books* (December 7, 1989) that Cubans are denied information on events in Eastern Europe, the Cuban press carries daily, comprehensive coverage on the subject. And whereas George Black complained in *The Nation* (January 1, 1990) that new Czech president Vaclav Havel is viewed with contempt by Castro, a recent Cuban journal began a prominent report: "The new president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, promised to guarantee the realization of free elections through correct and peaceful means" (*Trabajadores*, December 30, 1989).

Some of the charges of Cuban-Soviet hostility raised in the *Times* editorial are simply absurd. The paper suggested that General Arnaldo Ochoa, the former head of the Cuban military mission in Angola, was executed last year because he sided with Soviet military advisers on matters of strategy. Ochoa in fact remained at his post in Angola until after the peace agreements were signed in December 1988. Rather, Ochoa and other officials were sentenced last summer, on the basis of substantial evidence, after

being convicted for corruption and connections to drug trafficking.

Moreover, the charge that Cuba "timed" the recent FMLN offensive in El Salvador, and that it was done to embarrass the Soviets and to jeopardize the peace process, ignores the entire history of the civil strife in El Salvador. Indeed, Castro was prophetic when he stated in his speech, two weeks before the U.S. invasion of Panama, that the greatest threat to peace is no longer nuclear war, but the "principle of universal intervention by a major power [which] spells an end to independence and sovereignty."

Cuban politics are as complex and as dynamic today as ever. The *Times* ignores this reality; it opts instead for the familiarity of invalid Cold War schematics. ●



Credit: Wide World Photos



# THE *NEW YORK TIMES* ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTION OF SEPTEMBER 6, 1989

By Edward S. Herman

The *New York Times* has long treated the South African government kindly, paralleling U.S. government "constructive engagement" and basic support of the apartheid regime. This may be illustrated by its handling of the pre-election protests of the black majority in the summer and fall of 1989, which were never featured by the *Times* and were not used to frame the significance of the election. There were numerous marches and actions protesting its deeply undemocratic and racist character, with protesters often subject to violent attacks by the police. These never reached the front page, and the words used in the headlines of their back-page coverage were invariably soft—"South Africa Beach Protests," August 20; "Pretoria Cracks Down on Defiance Campaign," August 21;

"Blacks Strike Over South African Vote," September 6—words like brutal or savage were not used, nor did the titles feature beatings, the use of whips, or the shooting of students.

## A Protest Worthy of the Front Page

On September 15, President F.W. de Klerk allowed protesters to march in Johannesburg without getting beaten up. Revealingly, it is at this point that the *Times* found a topic worthy of front-page notice, along with a picture of marchers (Christopher Wren, "De Klerk Lets 20,000 Marchers Rally in Downtown Johannesburg," September 16, p. 1). The rule seems to be that repression coverage is low-key or non-existent; positive acts and openings that can be interpreted as

## The *Times* Headlines on South Africa

A great deal about bias can be gleaned from the headlines. In support of our assertion that the *Times* is inordinately kind to the government of South Africa, here are some comparisons:

### *New York Times:*

"U.N. Unable to Verify Abuses by SWAPO" (Oct. 12, 1989, p. A3)  
 "Pretoria Cracks Down on Defiance Campaign" (Aug. 21, 1989, p. A5)  
 "Pretoria Troops on Alert After a 'Report' on Namibia" (Nov. 2, 1989, p. A3)  
 "Pretoria Playing Down Namibia 'Infiltration'" (Nov. 3, 1989, p. A3)  
 "Pretoria Asserts Hoax in Reports on Namibia" (Nov. 4, 1989, p. A3) \*  
 Nothing \*\*  
 Nothing  
 Nothing  
 Nothing  
 Nothing \*\*\*

### Other Papers:

"U.N. Team Clears SWAPO Over 315 Missing People" (*Financial Times* [London], Oct. 12, 1989, p. 6)  
 "De Klerk Showing a Brutal Side" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 22, 1989, p. 1)  
 "Botha Climbs Down Over Swapo 'Invasion'" (*FT*, Nov. 4, 1989, p. 3)  
 "Pretoria Hoaxed on Swapo Buildup" (*FT*, Nov. 6, 1989, p. 3)  
 "ANC Leaders to Test Pretoria's Sincerity" (*FT*, Oct. 13, 1989, p. 4)  
 "ANC Warning Over Release of Prisoners" (*FT*, Oct. 14, 1989, p. 2)  
 "Mandela Tells ANC to Refrain from Violence" (*FT*, Oct. 21, 1989, p. 3)  
 "South Africa: Mandela Won't Be Free This Year" (*PI*, Dec. 23, 1989, p. 11A)  
 "U.N. Counts Cost to Region of Pretoria's 'Export of Violence': S. African Aggression 'Costs \$10 Billion'" (*FT*, Oct. 14, 1989, p. 2)

Here is a small sample of *Times* items putting their constructively engaged friends in a good light: "South Africa Disbands Special Police in Namibia" (Oct. 1, 1989, p. A6); "South African Police to End Use of Whips" (Sept. 12, 1989, p. A5) (note that the use of whips had never been headlined or featured before); "Pretoria Says It Might Call End to

Emergency State" (Oct. 22, 1989, p. A12); "DeKlerk Calls for Gradual Change" (Sept. 21, 1989, p. A3); "A Black Town Suffers for Fidelity to South Africa" (Oct. 31, 1989, p. A6); "In Pretoria: New Man, New Hope" (editorial, Aug. 16, 1989).

\* The Reuters dispatch, carried by the *Times*, says Botha "hopes" the report was false, and that he would be "overjoyed" if this were the case. The *Financial Times* shows that the hoax originated in the South African security services and that the army "assured Mr. Botha that the radio messages were genuine." The *Times's* reports never discuss the origin of the hoax.

\*\* The *Times* does not feature ANC tests of sincerity, warnings, or views in general. Nor does it like negatives, such as the intended non-release of Mandela. Like the U.S. government, however, it does worry about ANC violence. The most substantial coverage ever given ANC head Oliver Tambo by the *Times*, with Tambo's photo, featured the question of ANC's killing of whites (Neil Lewis, "African National Congress Leader Defends Killing of Whites," January 24, 1987, p. 3).

\*\*\* A U.N. study of Pretoria's "Export of Violence" was unreported in the *Times*.



Credit: Wide World Photos

### President de Klerk.

favoring South Africa's image are pushed front and center. (See box on *Times* headlines on previous page, and sidebar below.)

### South Africa Abhors Force

The *Times's* apologetic runs deeper. On September 4, just two days before the election, it offered a long front-page lead article by Wren: "South Africans Put Rising Faith in Negotiations." This article expounds a recent propaganda theme of the South African government, which has called upon the African National Congress (ANC) to renounce violence and accept peaceful negotiations. This tactic assumes that the West will ignore the fact that the apartheid government retains its massive paraphernalia of violence, as well as complete institutional and legal command, so that the appeal is for unilateral surrender of the option of force by the weaker

and excluded party. Wren points out late in the article that de Klerk "has made it clear that the Government does not intend to negotiate itself out of power." This would seem to acknowledge that the disenfranchised black majority can not expect to achieve the rights of citizens through negotiations, but Wren does not comment on this statement. He points to the "inflexibility" of the blacks' representatives in insisting on "a repeal of emergency rule and of other laws circumscribing political activity," the release of political prisoners, and the like. Wren suggests that these are unreasonable demands.

### Great Election: Eighty Percent Disenfranchised

In handling the election proper, the *Times* reflected the official U.S. position on the South African election in detail. The issue of how an election could be meaningful with a majority of the population excluded from participation was simply not addressed, and election-period news was selected and presented to give the apartheid government an aura of moderation and legitimacy.

The front-page article by Christopher Wren on the day

## HOW THE *TIMES* SHAPES THE NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

By Sean Gervasi

The early evening television news on election day, September 6, 1989, showed confrontations between demonstrators and police. The police had fired on crowds and killed 29 people in various protests, the largest death toll in such a clash since Sharpeville in 1960. It was after midnight in South Africa, but, at 7:00 p.m. in New York, the *Times* had not gone to bed.

The next morning, to my amazement, I saw a bland front-page *Times* story about the "governing party" losing ground in the vote. Subheads focused exclusively on the government's retaining power despite inroads by various white groups on the right and "the left." The lead paragraphs made no mention of any unusual events; there was not a word about violence on the front page, no mention of anyone being killed, let alone 29 people. On its front page, the *Times* gave the impression that South Africa had passed the day in complete calm.

In the continuation of the story on page 14 there was a hint of the day's events. The country, the *Times* reported, was in the middle of a general strike, and there had been a month-long protest against the apartheid elections. Three million people had demonstrated and there had been widespread clashes with the police. There was still no mention of the police actually firing on anyone.

On September 8, the *Times's* pattern continued, its page-one headline stating, "Pretoria Sees Mandate for Change in Racial Policy." Six of the seven paragraphs on the front page proceeded in this manner. A subhead did say, "Tutu Says 23 Killed in Protest," but only at the end of the page was the statement that Archbishop Tutu "told a news conference in Cape Town today that police killed at

..." Here the column broke. The article continued on page A8, beginning, "least 23 people in a protest in Cape Province on Wednesday night."

This brief phrase was followed by four columns of copy, with photographs of the happy elected and a paragraph on the distribution of seats in the white assembly. One sentence for the news of 23 election-related killings. While South Africa buried its dead, the *Times* was burying the news.

The same day, the *Washington Post* reported more or less what had happened. It ran the story of the shootings on the front page, under the headline "Killings Follow South Africa Vote; Tutu Blames de Klerk's Police." The story was accompanied by a photograph of armed police in an armored personnel carrier patrolling a township street.

On September 9, the *Times* was still minimizing the shootings. It ran another peripheral story about the events of September 6, this time about a police lieutenant who had tried to restrain police attacking students. After emphasizing positive actions in this manner, the *Times* did mention, in its page-five story, that Archbishop Tutu and the Reverend Alan Boesak, "churchmen critical of the Government," had said 29 people had been killed by police.

Two paragraphs out of 14 dealt with the issue and the second was about the Minister of Law and Order accusing Tutu and Boesak of "misleading the world about the deaths."

The *Times* clearly sought to play down the importance of the opposition and the barbarity of the apartheid state, and to create the impression of normalcy conducive to the hope that change will come by "evolutionary means." ●

after the election (September 7) is entitled: "Governing Party Gives Up Ground in Pretoria Vote." The frame used is the restructuring of power among the contesting parties and its implications. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, while featuring the election results, put in a second front-page article entitled "A meaningless spectacle for the excluded blacks," quoting in a small box the view of a representative of the excluded majority that "We say that nothing has changed but the initials—from P.W. [Botha] to F.W. [de Klerk]." It will be recalled that in the case of the Nicaraguan election of 1984, Arturo Cruz's *voluntary* refusal to participate was used by the *Times* as the basis for declaring that election a sham, on the grounds that the "main opposition" had been excluded. In the case of South

Africa, the exclusion by law and threat of force of 80 percent of the population and their representatives—a *real* "main opposition"—was simply ignored by the *Times*.

The *Times's* South African election coverage also virtually suppressed the substantial number of killings of election protesters (see sidebar on previous page). The testimony by a South African officer, Lt. Gregory Rockman, which recounted numerous cases of unprovoked police brutality, featured in the *Inquirer* on September 15, was also played down by the *Times*. Lesser abuses by Nicaragua were regularly featured by the paper of record in 1984 and throughout 1988 and 1989 in advance of the 1990 election, but that was a "destructively engaged" country, and the news was adapted accordingly. ●

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# SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

By Brian Tenenbaum

When virtually all of the world condemned the U.S. invasion of Panama, they did so because they saw the invasion as a violation of international law and of Panama's national sovereignty. In this country, however, the White House focused on Noriega's villainy in order to harness support for the invasion. Thus any opposition to U.S. actions in Panama is transformed by the administration into support for Noriega.

The corporate press has colluded in this view of the conflict, as two particularly clear examples show:

- On January 3 a *Wall Street Journal* editorial characterized voting on a United Nations resolution to condemn the U.S. invasion under the headline, "Noriega - 75; U.S. - 20" (p. A6). The editorial then listed the voting nations as follows: "Here's the score sheet: FOR NORIEGA: ... FOR THE U.S.: ... ABSTENTIONS: ... NOT PRESENT: ..."

- Two days later, a *New York Times* photo caption read: "As Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega was arraigned at Federal Courthouse in Miami, demonstrators who were

celebrating his surrender tried to rip a sign from the hands of a pro-Noriega demonstrator. The sign, in English and



Spanish, said, 'U.S.A. Hands Off Panama' " (January 5, 1990, p. A12).

Nothing in this photograph (above) or the article that accompanied it suggests that this demonstrator or any others were "pro-Noriega." ●

## About Our Cover:

The Bush administration justifies its massive intervention in the Nicaraguan election as an attempt to equalize a contest they view as unfairly weighted in favor of the Sandinistas. At the same time they say they are not supporting any one party, but only "democracy." Bush refers to this as "leveling the playing field." Yet, as our cover shows, he is definitely friendly with Violeta Chamorro, the presidential candidate of the opposition party, hardly a non-partisan in that game.

We encourage our readers to alert us to similarly striking photos and news items from their local or regional press.

## Lies Of Our Times

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